

Foreword

I was quite excited to preview this Linux-only edition of the *UNIX System Administration Handbook*. The third edition of *USAH* included coverage of Red Hat Linux, but it was only one of four very different variants of UNIX. This version of the book covers several major Linux distributions and omits most of the material that's not relevant to Linux. I was curious to see how much of a difference it would make.

A lot, it turns out. Linux distributions draw from a common pool of open-source software, so they're far more similar to one another than are other versions of UNIX. As a result, the text seems to have become considerably more specific. Instead of suggesting various ways your system *might* behave, the authors can now tell you exactly how it *does* behave.

At the same time, it's clear that all the richness and variety of UNIX software are still represented here. Just about all of the world's popular software runs on Linux these days, and Linux sites are finding themselves faced with fewer and fewer compromises. As big-iron vendors like IBM, Oracle, and Silicon Graphics embrace Linux, it is rapidly becoming the universal standard to which other versions of UNIX are compared (and not always favorably!).

As this book shows, Linux systems are just as functional, secure, and reliable as their proprietary counterparts. Thanks to the ongoing efforts of its thousands of developers, Linux is more ready than ever for deployment at the frontlines of the real world. The authors of this book know that terrain well, and I am happy to leave you in their most capable hands. Enjoy!

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